

*The Essay on,*

THE  
**APOCYNUM CANNABIS**

*Respectfully submitted*  
*To the* **FACULTY** *of the*

**Homoeopathic Medical College of**  
**PENNSYLVANIA**

*on the Thirty first day of January*  
*one thousand eight hundred and fifty three*

**BY**

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*Apocynum Cannabis*



As the great law of Simile progresses and men of intellect, reflection and research are investigating its truths, and are numbering themselves among its adherents; complaints are arising on all sides, concerning the *Matena Medica*, and the unscientific arrangement of symptoms therein contained.

It is, but natural, that those, who, seeing the truths are willing to support the doctrine of Simile, at this period of its advancement, when there is such an amount of opposition to contend with and overcome, should deeply feel the importance of a *Matena Medica Pura*; for it is by symptoms, their genuineness, and purity that its complete establishment is to be ultimately accomplished —



The astonishing cures that are effected by the well selected remedy, are daily adding to the numbers, who already embrace the theory of Hahnemann, and the frequency of such successful treatment, would be obviously increased, if there were positive proof as to the correctness precision and order of occurrence of the symptoms.

The errors in the Materia Medica, are so numerous and palpable, that it requires no learning or reflection, indeed very little common sense to detect them — for instance we read that "orphans, when afflicted with dry herpes, resembling scald head" are more susceptible than others to the action of certain remedies. It is written as a symptom in our Codex that "the eyes fill with tears, when looking toward the sun," again "of ulcers taking on a more healthy appearance and dischar-



ging mucus" also" the head feeling like a  
mealy apple, and a great variety of such  
ridiculous symptoms, warrant enough in  
themselves, not only for opponents, but for  
any one, to expose to laughter, and treat  
with contemptuous ridicule the doctrines of  
Hahnemann -

The order of occurrence of Symptoms  
in the Materia Medica has been almost -  
totally disregarded; and instead of their being  
noted down, as they were experienced by the  
Prover, they are wholly disjointed - A portion  
of a symptom, (under the present arrangement  
in the codex) might have to be placed in  
the commencement of the proving, because  
it refers to the head, or the moral effects  
produced by the drug, while perhaps a  
fragment of the same symptom, designating



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the action of the medicine upon the inferior extremities, is noted down at the end of the proving; the interspace being filled with pages of new and entirely different Symptoms -

This arrangement is calculated rather to draw-off the attention of the practitioner from the Symptom: of which he is in search, and perhaps lead him to endeavour to discover another remedy more suitable to the case which he is treating - It is evident from the above that the order of occurrence of Symptoms if carefully noted down, might often prove exceedingly advantageous, in pointing out one, from a particular group of medicines the Symptoms of which were so nearly allied as to cause a doubt to arise in the mind of the Practitioner in regard to the Selection of his remedial agent -



In the annexed proving of the *Apocynum Cannabiz*; I have endeavoured not only, to follow out this rule, and first insert the Symptoms in the order they were experienced, by the Prover; but also, to expurge such as are erroneous either in points of Anatomy or Expression —

I must also offer in this place an apology for the incompleteness of the proving and respectfully submit it to the Faculty of this College as an imperfect pathogenesis with the hope that hereafter it may be perfected and corrected by others who seek to advance the Science of Medicine —

#### Botanical Description

The word *Apocynum*, is the name of a genus of Plants, it is derived from the Greek, and literally signifies dogsbane.



or poison for dogs -

There are three species of the plant -  
viz. *Androssæmifolium*, the *Hypericifolium*  
and the remaining variety which is the  
subject of this essay - It is the second species  
of the order *Apocynum* - class *Pentandria*.  
order *Dygynia* -

It grows common in almost every section  
of the United States, and is generally found  
in the neighborhood of water courses, borders  
of woods and cultivated fields, flourishing  
best in the latter situations, or where some  
agricultural operations have disturbed  
the soil - It is a perennial plant &  
is generally found springing up beside  
the old stalk of last year - The stem  
is erect, round and smooth, and grows  
to the height of from two to four feet,



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it is of a yellowish green color in the shade but in the sun it changes to a beautiful red. The flowers are well situated at the Summit of the Stem, and are of a pink or purplish hue. They have the peculiar property of catching flies, gnats &c. The manner in which these insects are caught and retained, has been the subject of some discussion, which it is not necessary to enter upon in this place. The root is horizontal and extends at right angles with the stem, frequently to the distance to three or four feet.

There are more minute descriptions of the plant to be found in Botanical Works, but for the purpose of identifying it, the above description, will I think be sufficient.

The preparation used in this instance



was a tincture obtained by digesting the fresh root in alcohol and afterward expressing the juice —

### Proving

Shortly after taking half a teaspoonful of the tincture, a feeling of nausea was experienced, which seemed to commence at the throat, and extend downward to the stomach; this symptom continued for nearly an hour, however, there was no inclination to vomit — There was an accumulation of water in the mouth, causing constant expectoration of a thin transparent fluid after which there was dryness of the fauces; The fancy became exalted, with a flow of good spirits — well pleased with every one — in about an hour, this gradually died away leaving a pain in the fore-head



particularly above the superciliary ridges  
 of a heavy drawing character together with  
 throbbing of the anterior temporal artery;  
 great drowsiness with drooping of the eye-  
 lids;- at times rumbling with darting pain  
 in the lower part of the abdomen - About  
 twelve o'clock M. These symptoms, had  
 almost disappeared, when another teaspoon-  
 ful of the tincture was taken, producing  
 the same effects as those noted above,  
 only in a more aggravated degree, together  
 with a constant desire to urinate, the  
 urine passing very copiously and freely.  
 On awaking the next morning, a severe  
 bruised sensation was experienced in  
 the limbs, all the joints, and particularly  
 in the small of the Back, almost impe-  
 ding motion, which disappeared after walk-  
 ing



The bladder seemed much distended, and after evacuating the urine, which was very turbid and hot, a thick mucous sediment was thrown to the bottom of the chamber. The urine after being voided left a burning in the urethra, which continued nearly half an hour.

All the next day (Jan 5<sup>th</sup>) there was experienced headache, and a discharge of a thin watery fluid from the urethra; the pain in the head was confined to the vertex and forehead, and was throbbing in character; there was also vertigo when rising, but particularly when yawning or stretching; pain at times in the left eye as though it were wearied, with drooping of the eye-lids - Coldness was sometimes perceptible in the hands and feet;



frequent call to stool four or five times during the day, the stools very soft and copious, being passed with little pain, with a general feeling of relaxation.

Discharge of much urine, with the same sediment as before mentioned, which was found to coagulate by heat, and in very many respects resembled albumen.

The tonsils and throat for a day or two seemed coated mucus which had dried upon them -

### Proving No 2

Decem. 15<sup>th</sup>. 10 o'clock. - Evening; one drop in a teaspoonful of water - Slept as usual -

Decem. 16<sup>th</sup> 9 o'clock, one hour after breakfast, dose as before. - Immediately after taking, a slight burning



sensation on the red part of upper lip;  
 slight nausea which soon disappeared -  
 Two hours after each meal, there was ex-  
 -perienced a very distressing oppression at  
 the epigastrium - also a sensation, as  
 if there were a working in the stomach.  
 This symptom lasted about two hours, and  
 then disappeared.

Decem 16<sup>th</sup> Evening. 9 o'clock - 2 hours after  
 meal; dose as before - Slept as usual.

Decem. 17<sup>th</sup> Morning. before breakfast, two  
 drops in a tablespoonful of water;  
 The same sensations at the epigas-  
 -trium as yesterday -

" 17<sup>th</sup> Evening - two drops as before  
 (Here it was taken purposely on an  
 empty stomach to ascertain positively  
 if the effects produced, would be



similar to those previously experienced.

about ten minutes after taking it, a similar sensation of distress at the Epigastrium was experienced, and to such a degree as to compel me to leave my sitting posture, and walk about, which gave me some relief - In the evening after taking the drug, about three hours after meal, not so much inconvenience was produced as when the medicine was taken in an empty stomach

Decem. 18<sup>th</sup> A.M. - After Breakfast, dose as before - Felt better to day. distress at Epigastrium less.

Decem 18<sup>th</sup> P.M. 9 o'clock - five drops in a teaspoonful of water - Soon after taking it: a sensation of working in the stomach as from wind



with Empty Eructations, after which relief was experienced - Slight pinching pains in the epigastrium shooting from right to left. - Slept as usual

Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> A.M. & P.M. five drops two hours after meals - No marked impressions save, that the Epigastric symptoms being about the same

" 20<sup>th</sup> A.M. five drops two hours after breakfast. slight nausea soon after taking the drug, which was of short continuance - Felt less distress at the Epigastrium to day.

" 20<sup>th</sup> P.M. 10 drops in a teaspoonful of water, soon after there was rumbling in the abdomen, and the peculiar sensation of working in the stomach - several short pinching



pains across the middle of the abdomen  
 Sensation as if a ball was pressed against  
 the inside of the wall of the stomach  
 at the pyloric region— Slept as usual  
 Dec 21<sup>st</sup> No medicine. Felt uncomfortable  
 " to day, on account of above sensa-  
 tions  
 " 22<sup>nd</sup> No medicine, Symptoms begin-  
 ning to disappear—

### Artificial Arrangement

Head. Slight burning pain in the fore-  
 head, chiefly above the superciliary  
 ridges, of a heavy drawing character  
 together with throbbing in the anter-  
 -ior temporal artery— Severe headache  
 in the vertex and forehead of a  
 throbbing character— vertigo when



rising, better when moving about - great vertigo when yawning and stretching.

Moral Symptoms - Flow of good spirits - Well pleased with everyone -

Eyes Drooping of the eye-lids; pain in eyes; weakness and pain in the left eye; falling of left eye-lid

Ears & Nose - No particular Symptom -

Mouth - Accumulation of water in the mouth; - Slight burning sensation on red part of upper lip; constant flow of a thin watery saliva; dryness of posterior portion of the mouth -

Throat Sensation of dryness of the tonsils, and uvula; appearing to be covered with a coating of dry mucus

Larynx & Chest - No particular Symptom



Stomach - Excessive nausea, which seemed to extend from the stomach to the throat - lasting nearly an hour; distressing feeling at the epigastrium; Sensation of working in the stomach, Sensation as if a ball, were pressing against the inside of the stomach at the pyloric orifice (This sensation occurred after every meal); distressing oppression at the epigastrium to such a degree, that it compelled the prover to leave his sitting posture and walk about, which gave some relief; - Sensation of working in the stomach as if from wind - Empty eructations relieved this symptom partially - slight pinching pain in the epigastric



region shooting from right to left -

Abdomen - Rumbling in the abdomen

Dartings in the lower part of the abdomen - Pinching pain across the middle of the abdomen -

Rumbling and pain a little above the symphysis pubis

Urine Slight burning in the urethra

Genitals after micturition, slight dis-

charge of a thin watery fluid from the urethra - Constant desire to urinate, the urine passing very copiously and frequently -

Urine turbid with an albuminous deposit -

Stool Frequent desire for stool; faeces tolerably consistent, quite black very copious - painless diarrhoea



stools yellowish in colour and passed in lumps -

Back & Early in the morning severe  
Extremities bruised sensation in all

the limbs and joints, but especially in the small of the back, greatly impeding motion, disappearing after moving about - Coldness of the hands and feet -

Sleep - Great drowsiness with heaviness of the eye lids, at ten o'clock in the morning

General Symptoms - The chief action of this medicine from the above proving will be seen to be upon the epigastric region and urinary apparatus - Pains generally of a bruised or gnawing character -



### Clinical Remarks -

Dr Helmut was called to visit a lad about fourteen years of age, whose case presented symptoms of most aggravated dropsy; all the cavities of the body were filled with effused fluid - The Thorax, pericardium, peritoneal sac, the scrotum (which latter resembled a distended bladder of a translucent appearance) together with effusion throughout the entire cellular texture. The difficulty of breathing was so great, that no other, than a sitting position could be maintained (orthopnoea); An examination detected disease of the mitral valve and semi-lunar valves of the aorta; with a probability also of ossification of the last named vessel, immediately at its departure from the left ventricle -



The case from its gravity afforded no prospect of cure, various medicines however were given of the lower attenuations, Arsenicum especially without any effect being produced - A tincture of the Apocynum Cannabis was made extemporaneously by the Doctor, and administered as a dernier resource of a mixture of ten drops of the tincture in half an ordinary sized tumbler of water, a small table-spoonful was taken every two hours, in the course of six or eight hours after the first dose. The water commenced passing rapidly away, and at the expiration of fourteen hours the body was literally emptied - To say that the abdominal integuments could be grasped and twisted into a ball by the hand, would be no exaggeration, so completely



and extensively were they relaxed

The relief however was temporary, in the course of twenty four hours, the water again commenced depositing itself in its former localities, and the boy in a short time endured a painful death, The aggravated heart affection in this case being probably the exciting cause of the effusion.